



Open Letter from London, Paris, Rome and Milan: Low Emission Zones to save lives

In a climate emergency, public health, the right to breathe clean air and the right to sustainable mobility have to be at the heart of all urban policies in the 21st century city. Guaranteeing these rights is fundamental to ensure equity in the ecological transition process.

Cities are leading the fight against climate change and the creation of Low Emission Zones is one of the most useful tools we have to reduce high levels of pollution. Every year in Europe 800,000 people die prematurely because of urban pollution. London, Paris, Brussels, Milan, Rome or Berlin: around 300 European cities have already created a Low Emission Zone, because scientific evidence shows that it is a life-saving measure.

According to the European Air Quality Directive, implementing policies that protect health is an obligation, not an option. That is why countries that are not following these guidelines are receiving multiple sanctions. Prioritizing the right to health is the new common sense shared by major European cities and the scientific community.

For this reason, in the face of the sentence of the High Court of Justice of Catalonia that annuls the Low Emission Zone of Barcelona, the cities want to show that we are united and convinced that it is necessary and urgent to implement policies against pollution.

This is a resolution that goes against the directives of the European Union and the WHO, the scientific consensus and, above all, the international common sense that understands the importance of protecting public health. In the midst of a climate and health emergency, judges cannot force governments to go backwards.

The air we breathe and our health are at stake. As representatives of European cities, we have a responsibility to protect public health and guarantee the right to breathe clean air.

On behalf of European cities, the following cities sign this open letter:

London, Paris, Rome and Milano